

# **BLUE SHEET**

## **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)**

### **Preliminary Summary Report of Serious CAL FIRE Injuries, Illnesses, Accidents and Near-Miss Incidents**



#### **Rolling Material Near Miss**

**August 5, 2013**

#### **Power Incident**

**13-CA-STF-002613**

**13-CA-CSR-000064**

#### **California Southern Region**

This Preliminary Summary Report is intended as an aid in accident prevention, and to provide factual information from the first 24 hours of the accident review. To that end it is published and distributed within a short time frame. Information contained within may be subject to revision as further investigation is conducted, and other reports and documents are received.

**Lookout**

**Communications**

**Escape Routes**

**Safety Zones**

## **SYNOPSIS**

On the morning of Monday, August 5, 2013, Copter 404 was dispatched to a vegetation fire on the Stanislaus National Forest. Helitack Crew 4 offloaded near the Stanislaus River and began a direct attack handline construction on the left flank. After approximately six hours of firefighting, a large boulder rolled down the hill towards the Helitack Fire Captain (FC). The FC took refuge behind a tree and sustained injuries to his arm while taking evasive actions.

## **NARRATIVE**

On Monday, August 5, 2013, at approximately 0843 hours, Copter 404 was dispatched to a vegetation fire burning on the Stanislaus National Forest (STF). Upon arrival, Copter 404 circled over the incident allowing the crew to get an aerial view of the incident and develop a plan. Copter 404 landed on a bridge spanning the Stanislaus River and Helitack Crew 4 offloaded. The crew proceeded to the left flank, anchored the fire at the riverbank, and began constructing handline along the fire's edge. The crew was assisted by Crew 81 from the Tuolumne Rancheria and CAL FIRE Baseline Crews 1 and 4.

After approximately six hours, the FC instructed the crew to take a break, and advised each to take protection behind a tree to protect them from rolling material. At the conclusion of the break a large boulder was observed crashing through trees and rolling downhill. Crew members began yelling, "Rock!" The FC realized the boulder was traveling directly toward him and immediately dove to the ground behind the tree where he had just taken his break. The boulder struck the tree and continued past the FC's position. As the FC watched the boulder move past him, he observed the tree he was behind began to fall and immediately rolled out of the path of the falling tree. The FC continued to yell, "Rock!" to notify personnel below him.

The FC accounted for all crew members and realized he had injured his left bicep. All resources traveled back down the line to the river's edge. The FC notified the Operations Chief that he had been injured and needed transportation for the crew. The FC was transported in a department vehicle to Sonora Regional Hospital for evaluation of his injuries and the crew was transported by ground to the Columbia Air Attack Base.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEW**

- Recognize the importance of maintaining situational awareness, evaluating a situation and taking immediate actions for life safety.
  - The Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) Loop is a continuing process. In this instance, the FC:
    - Observe - Observed the boulder rolling down the hill
    - Orient – Determined the boulder was coming towards his position
    - Decide – Chose to take refuge behind a tree
    - Act – Moved to a position behind the tree
    - The FC continued processing the OODA Loop, in observing the tree beginning to fall on his position and rolling out of the path of the tree.